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Organizational Review of the Regional Bilateral Agreement on Labour Force Development Between Human Resources Development Canada and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan

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1. Executive Summary

Arthur Andersen was engaged to conduct a financial and organizational review of the Regional Bilateral Agreement (RBA) on Labour Force Development between Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS). Results of the financial review have been summarized in a separate document. This report focuses on the organizational component of the review.

Overall, our review found that much progress appears to have been made in improving the situation that existed in late 1997-early 1998. In particular, the relationship between various levels of HRDC and the MNS and its operating arm, Metis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI), have noticeably improved according to interviewees and our own observations.

This improvement in relationships is largely attributable to more open and positive communication between HRDC and the new MNS administration and METSI staff. Concerns relating to administrative and financial controls have also begun to be alleviated due to METSI's progress in developing policies and procedures and the capacity required to implement and enforce them. Still, this area will continue to be sensitive until the systems that have been or are in the process of being put in place are proven to be successful.

Both sides are keen to have additional training and employment responsibilities devolved to the Metis. Notwithstanding the progress that has been made to date to accomplish this goal, our review identified issues in five main areas that should be addressed in order to ensure a smooth transition from the current RBA to a new agreement/s, and to enable METSI to more successfully fulfil its mandate in the future.

1. **Service Delivery, Programming, and Evaluation**

   Many clients are reportedly being served well by the Local Metis Management Boards (LMMB's). However, reliable, complete tracking of results is unavailable for the whole organization, and a clear, mutually acceptable evaluation framework has not been developed by HRDC and the Metis.

   Programming is led almost entirely by the LMMB's, but there are increasing demands on METSI to play more of a lead in program development and guidance. METSI, however, requires greater capacity in terms of expertise, time freed up from administrative tasks, and funds in order to play a greater role.

2. **Communication and Information Dissemination**

   All parties agree that relationships between the Metis and HRDC have improved from the disharmonious state that existed in late 1997-early 1998. However, communication challenges remain which, if not overcome, could threaten the long-term success of the current RBA and future devolution. For example, frustration on the part of LMMB's about the way changes are communicated to them and the time it takes to obtain answers from METSI could cause difficulties in successful implementation of standard operating procedures. Within HRDC, communication between the policy and local delivery groups may be challenged with respect to the realistic availability of resources and support being committed to in the RBA and in the "RBA/AFFA Handbook", issued by HRDC's Aboriginal Relations Office. Awareness of HRDC's human and other resources available for support will be particularly important in the future, since federal government

jurisdiction and employees responsible for training and employment are transferring to provincial governments, while administration of the RBA remains with HRDC.

3. **Administration and Financial Controls**

   Implementation of the RBA has been affected from the start by a lack of administrative readiness on the part of the Metis and HRDC. Steps have been taken to improve the situation, such as the development of a policies and procedures manual which was near completion at the time of our review. METSI has the mandate to enforce this manual; however, it may lack the authority and controls to do so. As well, financial and administrative systems are unproven and the extent and nature of further devolution of services, and the impact this will have on administrative system requirements, is not well known at this time. A major issue which needs immediate resolution is the lack of a written agreement between HRDC and METSI which details what constitutes eligible overhead expense.

4. **Organizational Model and Governance**

   The organizational model, with METSI as the operational arm of the political organization and regional boards and offices directing local service delivery, is not very different from the other organizations included in the benchmarking study. MNS and METSI have embraced an arms-length governance model; however, the new METSI Board is untested and political instability in some regions is causing difficulties in the governance of some LMMB's.

5. **Future Devolution of Training and Employment Responsibilities**

   The current RBA is expiring in seven months; however, a clear vision of what specific additional responsibilities may devolve to the Metis, and a plan regarding what tasks need to be performed, who is responsible, who will assist, and what specifically demonstrates that progress has been made, were not yet in place at the time of our review. A process to begin the necessary dialogue is only now, at the time of the release of this report, beginning.

A number of recommendations addressing the above issues have been made in Section 9 of this report. A jointly designed, detailed action plan is required of HRDC and the Metis to implement these recommendations. This "to-do" plan must clearly identify what each party's responsibilities are, and provide for frequent progress checks against the plan, to ensure a successful transition from the current RBA to a new agreement.

2. Background

At the request of the Director General, Saskatchewan Region, of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), Arthur Andersen was engaged in February, 1998 to conduct a review of the Regional Bilateral Agreement (RBA) on Labour Force Development between HRDC and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS).

The objectives of the review were:

1. To review the current financial position of Metis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI) as it relates to potential overpayments with respect to administrative expenditures funded through HRDC for the period starting April 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997;
2. To review the current organizational structure, corporate management, reporting relationships, internal control structure, current operating procedures and controls in place to provide financial accountability by METSI in relation to the RBA; and
3. To provide recommendations for improvements and an implementation plan to the current management control and organizational structure in order to assist in the provision of future financial accountability and enhance communication, reporting and operating relationships.

There were two distinct components to the review:

1. Financial internal controls
2. Organization and corporate management

A report summarizing the results of the financial review has been prepared as a separate document. The following report primarily focuses on the organizational review, although the high-level observations and recommendations of the financial review have been included where appropriate.

3. Organizational Review Methodology

3.1 Objectives

The objective of the organizational review was to provide a balanced view of:

Areas (activities and functions) where METSI appears to be meeting or exceeding current requirements and expectations;
Areas (activities and functions) where the organization appears not to be meeting current requirements and expectations;
Areas of opportunity or concern for the future;
Alternative models of organization and corporate management and the criteria for evaluating each; and
Opportunities to improve communications between HRDC and METSI and the processes by which these two organizations interact.

In order to meet these objectives, the following worksteps were performed.

3.2 Review of Background Documentation

We reviewed all relevant background documentation, including the RBA, the MNS Constitution, correspondence between HRDC and METSI/MNS, Prairie Research Associates' (PRA) Mid-Term Review of the RBA, and HRDC's Regional Bilateral Agreement Aboriginal Flexible Funding Arrangement Handbook.

3.3 Interviews

14 individuals from METSI, MNS, two Local Metis Management Boards (LMMB's), and HRDC personnel were interviewed with respect to their views of communication, organization and governance structures, program activities, areas for improvement, and future devolution.

We also conducted 11 benchmarking interviews and collected information from similar Metis organizations and HRDC individuals in Manitoba, Alberta, BC, Saskatchewan and Ontario. Comparative profiles of the RBA agreements in Manitoba, Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan are provided in Appendix A.

The full list of individuals we spoke with can be found in Appendix B.

3.4 Analysis

We analyzed all information gathered on the basis of where roles and responsibilities, as set out in the RBA and summarized in Table 1, were being met or exceeded versus where they were potentially not being met. Issues were identified in five main areas:

1. Service delivery, programming, and evaluation
2. Communication and information dissemination
3. Administration and financial controls
4. Organizational model and governance

5. Future devolution of training and employment responsibilities

Table 3.1 – Roles and Responsibilities of Metis and HRDC as Described in the RBA

Metis	HRDC
• Negotiate and sign funding agreements • Accountable to Metis and Canadian people • Disseminate information to Metis people • Develop programs and services; delivery infrastructure; policies, procedures and standards of operation • Evaluate results jointly with HRDC • Ensure financial accountability and monitor and report financial situation • Govern at arms-length from operations	• Negotiate and sign funding agreements • Accountable to Canadian people • Assist Metis in development of programs and services; delivery infrastructure; policies, procedures and standards of operation • Evaluate results jointly with Metis • Monitor financial situation and compliance with RBA's terms and conditions

3.5 Workshop

A workshop for representatives of HRDC, METSI, and MNS was held on July 20, 1998 to "play back" and clarify our findings, and to discuss possible alternatives and improvements.

Sections 4-8 of this report summarize the findings of the review and the discussion that took place at the workshop. Section 9 presents the recommendations that were discussed at the workshop, and prioritizes them in terms of their urgency, ease of implementation, and resource intensity in order to assist METSI, MNS, HRDC, and the LMMB's in continuing the process of developing Metis capacity to absorb training and employment responsibilities previously held by HRDC.

4. Service Delivery, Programming and Evaluation

Many clients are reportedly being served well, but there are difficulties with tracking and evaluation of results, as well as with expanding service capacity at METSI and the LMMB's.

4.1 Current Situation

Client Service

Reliable, complete tracking of the status of client interventions is currently unavailable for the whole organization. However, our general impression after interviewing HRDC, METSI, MNS, and LMMB officials is that many clients are being well served. This same conclusion was also formed in PRA's mid-term review.

Programming

The 12 LMMB's throughout Saskatchewan are responsible for the development and delivery of local employment and training programs and services to the Metis in their regions. During our interviews, one LMMB Manager expressed a wish that METSI would provide more central programming guidance.

Cooperation Between LMMB's and with First Nations, Industry, and Government

There appears to be some cooperation between LMMB's and with other aboriginal groups, industry, and government taking place to expand services and access funding from other sources in addition to the RBA.

20(1)(b)(c)

As well, the Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC) was formed by the four northern regions and jointly funded under the Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement to develop and support networked career services in northern Saskatchewan.

4.2 Main Issues

Evaluation Framework and Tracking System

The evaluation framework and tracking system are currently not fully satisfying the requirements of the Metis or HRDC.

HRDC stresses quantitative measures such as savings to the Employment Insurance and social assistance systems, number of jobs entered, and number of training seats purchased in its evaluation of the RBA's success. The Metis, however, stress more holistic evaluation standards, including quality of life and the impact of other forms of intervention on training and employment. While the Metis also view quantitative measures as being important, participation by the Metis in savings generated by efficient performance is not part of the current arrangement.

According to the RBA, a joint evaluation steering committee was to have been formed to finalize a mutually-acceptable framework for evaluating the results of the RBA. This does not appear to have ever occurred, however, and the differences described above remain.

The system that was implemented to record and track client status, TAS, has had several problems from the start of its implementation in terms of inadequate infrastructure, training, and ongoing support. As a result, the system has not been able to provide data regarding the results of client interventions for the whole organization. Since our interviews, there apparently have been steps taken to get the main server from the vendor, SITAG, installed at METSI's office to improve performance and allow for direct uploads of data from the LMMB's. As well, TAS II, an upgraded, more user-friendly version has been developed. METSI has recently hired a computer systems analyst on a contract basis to oversee the new system, take the opportunity of the upgrade to more fully train users, and provide ongoing support.

METSI Capacity to Provide More Programming Leadership

The METSI staff is currently consumed by daily administrative duties, including checking and processing claims, troubleshooting for the LMMB's, and inputting client data into the tracking system at HRDC's office. Greater capacity in terms of expertise, time freed up from administrative duties, and funds is required in order for METSI to play a greater role in programming.

Distribution of Funds Among LMMB's

Each of the 12 LMMB's currently receives an equal amount of programming and administrative funds despite differences in Metis populations, labour market needs, and geographical limitations. Some concern was expressed by individuals interviewed that this funding formula is too simplistic, and may not allow for the optimum capture of training and employment opportunities by the Metis people as a whole. However, there may not be a strong will to change the present arrangement.

Potential Regionalism Among LMMB's and Resistance to New Ideas

One interviewee noted that the 12 LMMB's sometimes have trouble sharing ideas and helping each other due to regionalism and "kingdom-building". As well, several barriers to change were reported with respect to cooperation with other aboriginal groups, industry, and hiring non-Metis as staff-members.

A representative of the northern region disagreed with the above concern, however, noting that workshops are being planned with respect to how the southern and central regions can learn from its cooperative ventures.

Program Framework

A METSI staffperson has drafted a program framework, to replace HRDC's, setting out client eligibility rules, program highlights, funding, the application process, and assessment criteria. However, further development and a process for approving this framework does not seem to be a priority.

4.3 Future Considerations

New Initiatives Under Discussion

New initiatives being discussed between the Metis and HRDC targeting youth, youth at risk, urban issues, and the disabled will require the ability on the part of METSI and the LMMB's to target more clients or some of the same clients in different ways.

Trend in Type of Funding

RBA funding flows to the Metis in two forms: Employment Insurance (EI) and Consolidated Revenue Funding (CRF). Reportedly, EI is increasing its share while CRF is decreasing. Since EI funding has several constraints in terms of the way it can be spent, the level of flexibility the Metis have over their own programming may be impacted.

5. Communication and Information Dissemination

All parties agree that relationships between the Metis and HRDC have improved from the disharmonious state that existed in late 1997-early 1998, the time Arthur Andersen was engaged to conduct this review. However, communication challenges remain which, if not overcome, may threaten the long-term success of the current RBA and future devolution.

5.1 Current Situation

Positive Relationships and Communication Flow

When Arthur Andersen was first engaged in early 1998, there existed a very disharmonious relationship between METSI/MNS/LMMB's and HRDC. When our review began several months later, METSI's CEO had been in his position for several months and a new MNS executive had been elected. Everyone interviewed agreed that relationships had improved dramatically.

Positive working relationships were observed between HRDC and METSI/MNS/ LMMB's, and METSI perceives a new willingness on the part of HRDC to partner and share information. METSI also appears to be fulfilling its responsibility as the information clearing-house for all parties.

Dissemination of Information to Metis People

MNS is responsible under the RBA for disseminating information to the MNS membership, but uncertainty was expressed by METSI staff regarding the format and frequency of this communication. A quarterly newsletter which was to have been sent to MNS membership reporting on RBA activity had not been produced and it was unclear what the plans were to do so or who was taking responsibility.

Since our interviews, a newsletter has apparently been produced by MNS for distribution to the MNS membership at a festival held at the end of July. Intentions are to produce similar newsletters on a regular basis.

Communication Challenges Within HRDC

Although the policy group in Ottawa and Regina and field personnel in Saskatoon do seem to communicate frequently, there was first evidence of a communication breakdown with respect to the necessity and purposes of this RBA review. As well, issues between the policy group in Ottawa and the field staff in Saskatoon, such as local HRDC preparedness to have available the resources that were committed to in agreements, or the reality of enforcing evaluation measures such as EI savings on the Metis, were heard and observed during the review.

5.2 Main Issues

Communication with LMMB's

Frustration was expressed by some LMMB's regarding the way changes are communicated to them, and the time it sometimes takes to obtain answers from METSI. One LMMB mentioned that being sent manuals to read by METSI was not the ideal way of communicating procedures to them, and that they would prefer other methods to have information communicated to them.

With respect to the time it takes to obtain answers from METSI, the interviewee recognized that there are new resource officers at METSI still learning their job and that things would probably improve over time. Nevertheless, frustration experienced at the LMMB's left untreated could potentially cause difficulties in successful implementation of standard operating procedures.

Internal HRDC Issues

HRDC field personnel in Saskatoon are accountable for the results of the RBA and for ensuring Metis compliance with its terms and conditions. As a result, most of their time has been spent rigorously monitoring the financial compliance of METSI and the LMMB's. Both in and outside the RBA, HRDC policy-makers in Ottawa and Regina have committed HRDC assistance in building Metis capacity in terms of helping to develop programming, HRDC staff secondments, and providing technology support. HRDC Saskatoon was caught unprepared for the amount of support they would be asked to provide after the current RBA was signed. With the level of support required unlikely to diminish in the near future, it is important that HRDC consider what resources they have available before committing to them.

5.3 Future Considerations

Transfer of HRDC Responsibilities to the Provinces

The communication link and human resource support available from HRDC personnel in Saskatoon is likely to decrease when jurisdiction for training and employment transfers from the federal to the provincial government while the RBA remains a federal responsibility. An HRDC official in Ottawa noted that more funds may be made available to RBA-holders to alleviate the impact of this change. However, since it is the expertise of the people which is really required, the extra funding may not adequately address METSI's needs.

6. Administration and Financial Control

Implementation of the RBA has been affected from the start by a lack of readiness on the part of both the Metis and HRDC. Steps have been taken to improve the situation, but financial and administrative systems are unproven and the extent and nature of further devolution of services, and the impact this will have on administrative system requirements, is not well known at this time.

6.1 Current Situation

Portion of Funding Spent on Administration

METSI reports that approximately 16-17% of RBA funding is currently spent on administration. In Manitoba, 17% is spent on administration while 14% is spent in Alberta. A direct comparison is difficult to make between these organizations due to the geo-political and structural differences between the organizations.

Policies and Procedures

An organization-wide policies and procedures manual is reportedly near completion. The manual will have three components: personnel, administration, and programs.

Accounting and Tracking Systems

The accounting and tracking systems are not currently functional at all LMMB's or at METSI, and management of outside consultants and vendors brought in to assist in their implementation has been problematic. This originally resulted in a lack of trust by HRDC in the financial controls in place at METSI and the LMMB's, and the need for HRDC to act as auditors. However, sufficient progress has been made in this area to cause HRDC to relax the level of monitoring required.

METSI Internal Accountant

METSI's accountant/controller position has had high turnover in the past and was vacant at the time of our interviews. A replacement has reportedly just been hired to fill this position.

6.2 Main Issues

Administrative Process

The administrative process in place at METSI and the LMMB's appears to be quite cumbersome, with numerous manual check points and duplication of effort resulting in higher-than-necessary effort resulting in less time available for strategic planning. For example:

- The Buffalo Narrows LMMB enters financial information into Accpac to satisfy METSI policy, and into another accounting package for its own accountant's purposes.
- The TAS tracking system requires hand-written forms to be filled out and then keyed into the computer. As well, METSI staff are currently entering data into the TAS system at HRDC's office while HRDC enters the same data into its own system.
- LMMB's send administrative expense claims to METSI monthly. METSI staff reported that it takes about two days to monitor each claim and check whether the LMMB has sufficient funds. During the workshop it was noted that some LMMB's have come to rely

on this and do not check their own claims. When METSI's monitoring is complete, the claim is then sent to HRDC where it is vigorously checked again.

- Claims from LMMB's for program funds, in the form of Course Purchase Notices, also must be manually checked by METSI and HRDC for sufficient funds and eligibility.

No Written Agreement Defining Eligible Overhead

Lack of a written agreement between HRDC and METSI regarding what constitutes eligible overhead expenses has caused numerous difficulties and sometimes acrimony between the groups. The RBA specifically states that such an agreement was to have been reached within 90 days of the signing of the RBA; however, this did not take place. As a result, METSI pays LMMB expense claims based on its own judgement which may not necessarily comply with HRDC's guidelines, some of which are also based on judgement and not well-documented.

METSI Authority to Enforce Policies and Procedures

METSI has the mandate to enforce policies and procedures once in place but may lack the authority and controls to do so. Authority over expenditures of funds and administrative staff rests with each LMMB. METSI, as a non-political entity, does not have the political authority to override LMMB decisions or discipline LMMB's who contravene policies. METSI staff are also not confident of receiving the political backing from MNS if LMMB's challenge their authority.

Inadequate User Training, Infrastructure and Support for Accounting and Tracking Systems

The Accpac accounting and TAS tracking systems were implemented with inadequate user training, infrastructure (particularly in rural areas), and ongoing technical support in the form of manuals or a support person. User training took the form of a demonstration as opposed to hands-on training.

At the time of our interviews, the action plan for fixing the situation was unclear. As stated in Section 4.2, a computer analyst has recently been hired to implement TAS II and retrain LMMB staff on TAS and Accpac. This person will also be available to support these systems on an ongoing basis.

6.3 Future Considerations

Additional Volume and Activity with Further Devolution

New programs and initiatives under discussion, as mentioned in Section 4.3, may require METSI and the LMMB's to handle approximately 50% more administrative funding and all program funds. The accounting and tracking systems must be capable of handling the additional volume of activity as well as potentially different tracking requirements.

7. Organizational Model and Governance

MNS and METSI have embraced an arms-length governance model; however, the new METSI Board is untested and political instability in some regions is causing difficulties in the governance of some LMMB's. Apparently, two regions (Yorkton and Prince Albert) are under trusteeship and MNS time and effort is required to overcome these challenges.

7.1 Current Situation

Organizational Model

The organizational model, with METSI as the operational arm of the political organization and regional boards and offices directing local service delivery, is not fundamentally different from the other organizations included in the benchmarking study.

New METSI Board of Directors

A new METSI Board has recently been struck with representation from each of the 12 regions. Each Region was to have advertised for qualified individuals and selected a representative by July 15, 1998. The intent of striking a new Board is to create a more arms-length governance relationship with less political influence on METSI's day-to-day operations.

New MNS Executive

Interviewees at MNS, METSI, and HRDC agreed that the recently-elected MNS executive have taken a much more hands-off approach to METSI's operations than their predecessors. The new executive appears committed to maintaining this arms-length relationship with METSI operations.

Composition of LMMB Boards

Previously, the Area Director for each region, elected by the region's members, normally acted as the Chair of the LMMB, and the Regional Council, made up of the Presidents of each local in the region, served as the LMMB members. In October 1997, the Metis Legislative Assembly passed a motion empowering each regions to put its most qualified people on its LMMB Board. Consequently, composition of each LMMB is now up to each Region, with some Regional Council's choosing to remain as the LMMB, some appointing other members to serve, and some placing the membership of the board up to a vote.

Regional Political Stability

Interviewees noted that the separation of politics and operations has not been easily or uniformly accepted in every region. An MNS executive cited a situation in Prince Albert where two groups claimed to have LMMB status. This led to a loss of control and the LMMB being placed under trusteeship.

7.2 Main Issues

Communication Link Between MNS and METSI

The MNS, signatory to the RBA and other agreements, does not currently have a presence on the METSI Board. MNS executive expressed some concern about their ability to stay fully informed about METSI's activities and its financial situation while maintaining a hands-off relationship.

Difficulties in Enforcing Constitution at Local Level

The MNS is concerned that HRDC will continue to doubt its ability to handle further training and employment responsibilities if all regions are not politically stabilized. Interviewees noted that there is a breakdown occurring in enforcing constitutional provisions at the local level. METSI does not have the political power to withhold services or funds from LMMB's that are not meeting regularly or documenting their meetings in minutes.

HRDC Representation as a Stakeholder

Although HRDC is a current stakeholder, it has no formal representation at the METSI planning level in an observer or advisor capacity. Workshop participants on both sides agreed that HRDC would likely not seek or be given representation at the METSI Board level.

Degree of Arms-Length Relationship Between MNS and METSI

Internal disagreement exists between members of the MNS executive as well as at the LMMB level about the appropriate degree to which a hands-off relationship with METSI and LMMB operations should be maintained. Some concern was expressed by an MNS executive member that isolation has been the result of the separation of politics and operations and he feels he is not negotiating with HRDC with complete information.

8. Future Devolution

The current RBA is expiring in seven months; however, a clear vision of what specific additional responsibilities may devolve to the Metis, what needs to take place, when, and supported by whom is not shared by all parties. A process to begin this dialogue is only now, at the time of the release of this report, beginning.

8.1 Current Situation

Expiry of RBA

The current RBA expires in March 1999, but a clear vision of what follows is not commonly understood. When interviewees were asked what they think will occur post-1999, most expressed a keen desire to evolve their relationship further, with more money and more programs transferring to the Metis. However, the specifics appeared to be vague to almost everyone, particularly on the Metis side.

During the workshop it was learned that a session was planned between HRDC, MNS, and METSI the following day to begin discussions on this issue.

New Programs to be Delivered and Administered Using Same Platforms

HRDC and the MNS stated that the idea is to have new training and employment programs targeting youth, youth at risk, urban issues, and the disabled delivered and administered by the same platform; i.e., METSI and the LMMB's.

8.2 Main Issues

Lack of Clear Plan to Transition from RBA to New Agreement/s

Both sides agreed that METSI needs to continue to demonstrate successful implementation of policies and procedures as it has been for the last number of months. However, without a clear, written plan outlining when tasks need to be performed, who is responsible, who will assist, and what specifically demonstrates that progress has been made, time could continue to elapse and both sides could be caught insufficiently prepared once again.

Trust

Although both the Metis and HRDC stated a number of times that their relationship with the other side is improved, there were statements made during our interviews which indicated that a level of mistrust still lingers. Apprehension of bad faith may hinder the success of future negotiations.

9. Recommendations

A preliminary set of recommendations was presented to workshop participants on July 20, 1998. The discussion that took place at the workshop caused some of the initial recommendations to be deleted or adjusted to reflect steps that had been initiated since the time of our interviews. Participants also added several recommendations to the list.

Based on the following criteria, the resulting recommendations have been prioritized in order to assist the Metis and HRDC in the successful transition from the current RBA to a new arrangement:

> Urgency of implementation: Is it critical that the recommendation be implemented within 1-3 months, should it be done before March 1999, or can it wait until after this date?
> Ease of implementation: Is the recommendation relatively easy to implement, moderately difficult, or difficult?
> Resource intensity: Does the recommendation require limited resources to implement, a moderate investment of time and/or money, or a significant investment?

In order of priority, recommended actions to address the issues presented in Sections 4-8, and who should take responsibility, are discussed below. A check mark indicates that the Metis and/or HRDC have stated that the action is already underway.

	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	LEADER/S
	Short Term (1-3 months)	
✓	1. Develop a joint workplan to resolve unsupported expenditures that occurred from April 1-December 31, 1997.	HRDC Saskatoon and METSI
✓	2. MNS executive and METSI reach consensus regarding their expectations of the post-RBA agreement; and METSI and HRDC jointly define steps to take, when and by whom to transition from current RBA to new agreement after March/99	MNS, METSI, and HRDC
✓	3. Create a joint committee or other mutually-agreeable means, such as task-based teams, of regularly discussing operational issues.	HRDC Saskatoon and METSI
✓	4. HRDC and METSI document eligible administrative expense guidelines	HRDC Saskatoon and METSI
✓	5. METSI finalize the policies and procedures manual in accordance with RBA guidelines. On an ongoing basis, the manual should be reviewed to ensure it is relevant and useful to the organization.	METSI
	6. Reexamine service delivery agreements with LMMB's to clarify what is required to receive services and who is responsible for enforcing requirements.	METSI and MNS
	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	**LEADER/S**
✓	7. Get TAS II tracking system functional at METSI and all LMMB's.	METSI
✓	8. Document appropriate METSI and LMMB Board procedures and train board members.	METSI

	9. Understand systems and capacity implications of new initiatives under discussion which METSI and the LMMB's will be required to deliver and administer.	METSI
	Medium-Term (before March 1999)	
	10. Formalize communication between METSI, MNS, and HRDC to increase stakeholder involvement at a strategic level.	METSI
	11. METSI ask LMMB's regarding their preferred means of communication	METSI
	12. Identify internal resources for training, such as the computer lab at the Saskatoon LMMB or expertise of LMMB personnel in programming, software, etc.	METSI
	14. METSI and LMMB's identify and develop resources in programming and delivery by understanding what specific expertise is required (e.g. services to youth, disabled). Resources might be developed through targeted hiring, specific training, contracting out to third parties, or secondment of HRDC staff.	METSI
✓	15. Develop and implement job-specific minimum skill requirements and an on-going, progressive training program to upgrade skills and alleviate problems caused by turnover. Training programs such HRDC"s "Mod 1" or one developed by SITAG could be possible options.	METSI
	Long-Term (after March 1999)	
	16. Eliminate non value-added time by examining, for example, where duplication of work is occurring, where there may be duplicate manual checking of claims, or cases in which too many people are meeting about the same issues.	METSI and LMMB's
✓	17. Find additional ways to link with industry to enhance training and employment opportunities, funding, or capacity-building resources.	METSI and LMMB's
	18. Allocate a portion of the programming budget to METSI to develop provincial initiatives involving more than one region.	METSI
	19. Use technology to market and deliver services, communicate and report, such as an internet web site and e-mail.	METSI
	20. Revise funding formula to LMMB's based on factors such as population demographics, geographical limitations, and labour market needs. Implement performance measures with each LMMB.	MNS and METSI

10. Next Steps

Joint discussions between HRDC and the Metis were to have begun in late July regarding the transition from the current RBA to a new agreement. Therefore, it may be that an effective forum for developing a "to-do" list to implement the recommendations in this report has already been established. If not, a committee with representation from HRDC, MNS, and METSI needs to be struck immediately to do so. The recommended actions outlined in Section 9 have varying lead times and all parties must be clear on what their specific responsibilities are. A jointly-

devised, detailed action plan and frequent dialogue to check progress is the best way to ensure a successful transition from the current RBA to a new agreement.

Appendix A

The following are profiles of the RBA's in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and the agreement with the Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC). These were prepared on the basis of conversations with Metis and HRDC officials in these provinces and a review of relevant documentation.

SASKATCHEWAN
Metis Nation of Saskatchewan

Approx. Metis Population	36,535
# Regions/Zones	• 12 Regions
Client Eligibility	• All persons identifying themselves as Metis are entitled to participate.
Funding Amount & Transfer	• $8.2 M. • At the start of the fiscal year, HRDC to advance to METSI 3 months' funds based on cash flow forecasts. At the end of the 3 months, METSI must submit a claim showing eligible costs incurred and paid and a revised forecast for the balance of the fiscal period. Upon receipt of the claim, HRDC advances 1 month's funds based on the revised forecast. Following the processing of the claim, HRDC advances an additional 2 months' funds. • Funds are divided equally amongst the 12 LMMB's; the current fiscal year administrative budget for each LMMB is approximately $220,000. • METSI signs service delivery agreement with each LMMB and advances 2 months of funds based on projections. LMMB's send in monthly claims to METSI detailing actual expenses. METSI monitors and forwards adjustments based on claims.
% CRF vs. EI	• 1996-97: CRF 72%, EI 28%.
Administrative Expense %	• 25% administrative cap. • An agreement defining eligible administrative overhead costs was supposed to be reached within 90 days of signing of the RBA, but it was not.
Governance Structure	• METSI Board to consist of 1 member selected by each of the 12 regions, plus the Minister and Associate Minister who are appointed from the 17-member Provincial Metis Council. • Local Metis Management Boards (LMMB's) govern each region. Locally-elected Area Directors serve as Chair of most of the LMMB's, although not all. Composition and size of LMMB's varies from Region to Region.
Administrative Structure	• METSI staff includes CEO, 3 Resource Officers, an Executive Assistant, an Accountant, and a computer systems person. METSI's role is to monitor administrative expenditures and liaise between HRDC and LMMB's. • Regional offices have varying staff sizes to develop, deliver and administer services locally.
Reporting Requirements	• METSI supposed to provide by the end of June of each year audited financial statements. • METSI supposed to provide written progress reports at HRDC's request, as well as a registry of clients served, awaiting service, or currently being served. • METSI supposed to provide Annual Report to the Metis people each year with respect to financial and program/service information and results. • Regions also required to prepare annual summaries of operations, expenditures, and results.

SASKATCHEWAN
Continued

Financial Accountability	• RBA: System was to have been set up to maintain books and records at METSI and LMMB's, with an independent financial management consulting firm brought in to do so. Separate banking accounts are required.
Tracking & Evaluation of Results	• Within 90 days of the signing of the RBA a joint Evaluation Steering Committee was to have been established, composed of 4 members, 2 from each of HRDC and METSI. Purpose was to finalize a framework for evaluating results of the RBA and assume responsibility for evaluation activities. • RBA sets out 5 evaluation measures: employment outcomes, equity outcomes, completion rates, economy/ROI/savings to EI account, and quality of service. • In reality, tracking is not uniformly implemented by all LMMB's, and evaluation of results is an issue between HRDC and METSI/LMMB's. • An operational review was supposed to be conducted by the Evaluation Steering Committee during fiscal year 1998-99 to look at the program's mandate, success, cost-effectiveness, and management framework. • Within 30 days following the signing of the RBA, both parties were to complete a monitoring plan for the agreement.
HRDC Support	• RBA provides for HRDC support through the Evaluation Steering Committee.

MANITOBA
Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF)

Approx. Metis Population	46,195
# Regions/Zones	• 7 Regions
Client Eligibility	• Clients can be Metis, Inuit or other Aboriginals residing in Manitoba.
Funding Amount & Transfer	• Funding advanced to MMF monthly based on estimated budget. MMF must provide substantiated claims for payment on a monthly basis in order to receive the subsequent month's funding. • MMF consults with Provincial Management Board (PMB) re: funding available to them, and PMB allocates, in consultation with Local Management Boards (LMB), funding amongst the LMB's on the basis of population, historical funding levels, needs of each LMB, cost of living, and other factors. PMB also assesses funding needs involving more than one region and allocates such funding as necessary in its own budget.
% CRF vs. EI	• Current split is CRF 83%, EI 17%.
Administrative Expense %	• Not to exceed 19% in first year (97-98) and 17% in second year (98-99). • Allowable administrative expenses include wages, benefits, & overhead costs of delivery staff, administration of payrolls, management audits, travel and other costs of RMB and LMB meetings, and costs of appeal procedures.
Governance Structure	• Each Region has a LMB of 4-7 members. Up to 5 members are elected by individuals in that Region, 1 member is designated by the Region's Friendship Centres, and 1 is designated by the Region's Metis Women of Manitoba executive. The LMB elects a Chairperson from amongst its members. • No LMB member may also be a member of the MMF Board of Directors. • The PMB consists of 1 appointed rep from each LMB, as well as up to 3 ex-officio non-voting members appointed by the MMF. The PMB elects a Chair from amongst its members, not ex-officio. • LMB's are responsible to PMB for compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures, and PMB is in turn accountable to MMF.
Administrative Structure	• Agreement is administered centrally within MMF offices. Each LMB has its own coordinator to deliver services locally. • Responsibilities assigned to personnel so that no one LMB/PMB manager or administrator controls all parts of the program. • MMF Guidelines contain conflict of interest provisions.
Reporting Requirements	• Reporting system developed by MMF and approved by Canada. • Annual report provided by MMF by May 30th of each year includes financial data for the fiscal year and an assessment and evaluation of the programs, services & projects delivered.

MANITOBA
Continued

Financial Accountability	• The MMF, in consultation with the PMB, was to have established an Audit Committee to ensure guidelines are adhered to; the Audit Committee will review the accounting procedures in use and test the accounting records and supporting documentation to ensure accordance with GAAP. • An independent auditor is engaged by the MMF annually to provide audited F/S. • MMF operates and maintains an RBA bank account separate from its other bank accounts.
Tracking & Evaluation of Results	• RBA provides for financial, technical and human resource assistance from Canada to collect data and document results of programs and services offered. • Administrative and program criteria and guidelines developed by MMF and approved by Canada. No specific evaluation criteria specified in RBA. • MMF evaluation framework intended to determine at minimum the impact on sustainable employment, the change in dependency on income support, and the impact on the Metis people and communities. • HRDC and Metis are currently working together to find means of performing joint evaluations to meet both their needs.
HRDC Support	• RBA provides for secondment of HRDC staff to MMF, states that Canada agrees to provide available demographic and labour market data, and commits to transfer knowledge and skills of HRDC staff to any new staff retained by MMF to assist in implementation of the RBA.

ALBERTA
Metis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) and Metis Settlements

Approx. Metis Population

50,745

 # Regions/Zones

- There are 2 RBA's in Alberta: 1 for the "Settlements" (Metis with land base) and 1 with the MNAA for off-settlement Metis.
- MNAA has 6 regions.
- Settlements 8 settlements.

Client Eligibility

MNAA RBA

- Clients must demonstrate that they are: unemployed or facing unemployment barriers, off-settlement Metis, in need of assistance and have explored other financing options, prepared to complete a client action plan, and committed to undertake and complete training.

Funding Amount & Transfer

- Total settlement and non-settlement funding $6.279 M + 550,000 for EI Part II.
- Settlement group gets about 25% of funding, non-settlement 75%.
- Settlement budget is about $2 M.

% CRF vs. EI

- CRF 70%, EI 30%.

Administrative Expense %

- 17% in first year, 14% currently.

Governance Structure

MNAA RBA

- MNAA Board consists of 14 people, with a President & VP.
- Each zone also has a political structure, with a President & VP.
- All projects and contracts are approved by the President of the MNAA.

Settlements

- Each settlement has a settlement corporation run by a 5-person Settlement Council elected by membership and headed by a Chairperson selected from the Council. Settlement Councils can make bylaws within their Settlements.
- The General Council is comprised of the elected councilors of all the Metis settlements and a 4-person executive elected by the councilors. The executive can't be Settlement Council members, nor can they vote on matters before the General Council. The General Council deals with matters that affect the collective interests of the Settlements, and makes policies that are binding on them.
- The Metis Settlements Transition Commission is an independent corporation responsible for the successful implementation of the Metis Settlements legislation.
- "Political environment" reported.

Administrative Structure

MNAA RBA

- Central body, the Labour Market Development Unit, is in MNA's office. Core staff: Director, Accountant, Admin. Assistant, Program Support person, Funding for Disabilities person, Youth Co-ordinator coming on stream.
- Central office controls all of the money.
- Each of the 6 zones has its own staff of 2: Labour Market Development Officer and an Assistant.
- Each zone has a project selection committee of about 5 people.

ALBERTA
Continued

Administrative Structure

Settlements

Director, Accountant, Admin. Assistant, person for Disabilities.

Reporting Requirements

Financial Accountability

MNAA RBA

- Financial reporting is done quarterly. Metis do an independent audit using a process provided by the HRDC.

Settlements

- Report to Alberta HRDC quarterly.

Tracking & Evaluation of Results

MNAA RBA

- Project monitored by project officers in each zone. HRDC doesn't monitor.
- Set their own goal of 65% success rate among client interventions

HRDC Support

MNAA RBA

- HRDC provides training support.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Metis Provincial Council of British Columbia (MPCBC)

Approx. Metis Population	• 26,750 (1996 Census)
# Regions/Zones	• 7 Regions
Client Eligibility	
Funding Amount & Transfer	• Approximately $3 million • 10% of total allocation was provided to the Metis, 90% to the First Nations • Funds are divided equally amongst the 7 regions. 3 of the regions are acting autonomously – they have contracted separate sub-RBA's with the MPCBC for service delivery and are operating as separate legal entities. The workers involved in these groups work for local education and training organizations and are not directly involved with any Metis Organization.
% CRF vs. EI	• CRF65%, EI 35%.
Administrative Expense %	• 25% administrative cap.
Governance Structure	• Working group reports directly to the MPCBC provincial council. One of the elected Ministers is directly responsible for the HRDC portfolio. • Board of Directors for the MPCBC has 7 members elected from each of the regions plus the president and vice president of the MPCBC. Each of the seven regional directors has a portfolio such as social services, women's issue etc. • The sub-bilateral regions have regional employment and committees formed from the members of the community to oversee the operation of the funding. The other regions are advanced funds directly through to the training institutions that they choose to contract with.
Administrative Structure	• 5-member staff includes a director, accountant, and a clerk responsible for accounts payable • A close working relationship exists between the director and the Minister responsible for the HRDC portfolio from the MPCBC • Two of the seven regions are administered out of the Director's office • Non-Metis people are directly involved in the process • METIC Committee (Metis Employment & Training Initiative Committee) is a standing committee of the MPCBC. Committee was struck to allow the 7 program managers to meet monthly to discuss policies and best practices. This board was to begin meeting in January but is not yet off the ground. An HRDC representative is also to be included to provide guidance in terms of the rules and regulations with respect to funding. The HRDC Minister is also to be present as an ex–officio member. The minister will be responsible for communication between the MPCBC Board of Directors and the METIC committee through the bilateral co-ordinator.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Continued

Reporting Requirements	• Central office receives a monthly report of activities and a financial report prepared by an accountant in each of these regions from the SBO's (Sub Bilateral region) • The board of directors of MPCBC is now being provided with their first annual report. The Board of Directors was getting quarterly reports based on the numbers of client visits.
Financial Accountability	• Monitoring focuses primarily on savings in EI – very high profile for HRDC. • HRDC does a review of the province-wide funding – they directly disburse funds to the three sub-RBA's who monitor their own service provision agreements – each of these three subdivisions provide audited statements directly to HRDC. • In September/October 1997 the entire group was placed into trusteeship and funding apparently had been stopped – MPCBC promised that they would get the funding organized and a structure brought into place.
Tracking & Evaluation of Results	• The regional coordinator for the MPCBC is supposed to be doing the monitoring. • HRDC can do an activity and financial review but they have not done so yet – it will be done in the near future. • Target monitoring is sent through the Contact 4 system from HRDC – this allows for activity reports to be generated at each region.
HRDC Support	• 13 local HRDC offices assist the councilors responsible for service delivery.

SASKATCHEWAN
Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC)

Background

Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC) is a non-profit, umbrella organization of agencies providing career services in Northern Saskatchewan, headquartered in La Ronge. The corporation was formed in March 1996 to propose and implement a project for the development and support of networked career services in northern Saskatchewan.

The project was approved and jointly funded under the Canada – Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement. The project started in May 1996 and all components of the project will be completed by September 1998, a few months behind schedule.

The strategic initiative program is a joint federal and provincial program - $3 million was made available over a 2 year period for career services – and the KCDC proposal for $1 million over two years was the successful proposal for the north – 3 such projects were awarded.

Goals of the Agreement

- To electronically network people delivering career services in Northern Saskatchewan.
- To develop a career planning process which is relevant to residents of Northern Saskatchewan.
- To develop and deliver career service worker training based on the northern career planning process.
- To develop and distribute Labour market information which is specific to northern Saskatchewan
- To develop and carry out a public awareness campaign for the residents of Northern Saskatchewan.

Successes

- KCDC was created with a focus on setting up the infrastructure correctly – it is a community-based organization.
- Northern Career Planning process – A process for career planning relevant to Northern Saskatchewan individuals has been developed by career counseling experts in consultation with, and based on input from, northern career service workers. Course was developed with assistance from the University of Saskatchewan, which developed a curriculum to determine the needs of the clients and also determined the learning needs of the councilors in the field. The councilors were brought in for training for about 1 week at a time, with each councilor getting about 4 weeks of training. The course is considered the approximate equivalent of a 3 credit hour university course. There is a heavy emphasis on the use of technology: e-mail and internet usage.
- Northern Career Services Network – career service workers in various institutions across Northern Saskatchewan are being networked using the internet and through regular communication to network members. Approximately 45 councilors from the field are now networked together
- KCDC Website – an internet website is being developed which will provide information and services to the northern career service worker network, as well as general information about northern Saskatchewan to the world wide web. The material is maintained on a server in Regina which is not easy to maintain or manage. The vision is to place all of the material on a server closer to northern Saskatchewan.
- Northern Career Service Worker Training – Training based on northern Career Planning Process has been developed and is being delivered for career service workers in northern Saskatchewan.

KCDC
Continued

Successes	• Northern Occupancy Interest Inventory – This tool will assist career planners in Northern Saskatchewan to make career choices based on a realistic assessment of their interests (validation process is underway , September 1998) • Video – "Working the Dream", a documentary film which follows the lives of five recent high school graduates from northern Saskatchewan has been completed and sent to all northern schools and community t.v. services.)
Client Eligibility	• Participation by Metis, First Nations, all northerners.
Funding Amount & Transfer	• $1.0 M. over two years
Administrative Expense %	• 10% administrative cap.
Governance Structure	• KCDC member agencies each provide a single representative to the KCDC board of directors. The formation of the KCDC with its mission to improve career service delivery in the North, marks the first time these northern career providing agencies have worked jointly on a project in which they all have equal decision making power. This structure has made possible the process of identifying and working towards common goals.
Administrative Structure	• Staff consists of a director, technical co-ordinator (internet), technical assistant (internet), clerical • These individuals are primarily involved in coordinating the information and advising the training institutions of upcoming courses in Northern Saskatchewan. • The current agenda is to secure new funding to maintain these 2 and ½ positions. They would also like to provide more technical expertise to those in Northern Saskatchewan such as in business development and entrepreneurship.
Reporting Requirements	• Directors meet monthly (normally in Prince Albert) to review the financial statement – review each of the project status and advise the director on any procedural matters that he needs to deal with.
Financial Accountability	• Accountants are responsible for preparation of the financial statements – financial procedures are clearly specified in the agreement. The KCDC board has recommended the development for proposal of a finance and administration system. The board has reviewed and has accepted the system of financial monitoring put into place. • HRDC has the authority to review the monthly financial statements and if necessary call for an audit using the provincial audit department – hasn't felt the need to do so on this project. The financial procedures were set up with the help of an outside accountant.

KCDC
Continued

Tracking & Evaluation of Results

- Evaluation system is provided by the SI initiative – Outside consultants are provided
- Evaluation consists of two components: Formative evaluates the existing structures and procedures; Summative provides the outcome and results review. This needs to be completed by the fall of 1998. The last six months of the funding have been intentionally left open so that the evaluation could take place and future funding requirements could be considered.
- Stakeholder interviews are performed with clients, councilors, bureaucrats
- Project activity status reviews are performed.

HRDC Support

- HRDC representative attends monthly meetings as an observer to assist in providing the funding increments that are scheduled over a two year period to match particular project milestones. 26 activities have been set out in the original contract; quarterly reports have been prepared on the status of the various projects as these projects are performed.
- HRDC rep reports to provincial and federal co-chairs on the project by means of status reports

Improvement / Potential Challenges

- Project fell a little bit behind schedule – KCDC simply could not perform the various work program elements as quickly as set out in the original workplan. More flexibility here would be advised.
- Provide various ethnic groups who come from different splintered organizations with a platform to work together including aboriginal and non aboriginal. The desired goal was to get all training courses wherever they are to become more open for any ethnic group to participate.
- Opportunities are not growing as fast as the population in the north – represents gaps
- Particular concerns are evident in trying to maintain contact with the 45 career advisors out in the field. These individuals often wear more than one hat and as such it is important to support them as they are busy dealing with social issues at the same time. They are setting up unique career agenda focus for those at the 7th to 9th grade level to promote the concept of a career.
- They are also using electronics media wherever possible with the use of the internet site and with radio and television advertising.
- Funding needs: KCDC believes that the Metis need to contribute to this initiative. An allocation of funding and greater access to the people in the field were deemed desirable. Right now outside administrative and clerical help (e.g. accountant) is at $50 per hour and it is felt they could do better.
- Currently the entire initiative is being reviewed as part of the Post Secondary education department – which is being transferred from federal to provincial responsibility
- Overall the project took awhile to build competency – the distance between the offices and the government is very far and some of the activities took longer to achieve than planned which resulted in the delay of the granting of funds.

Appendix B

The following individuals were interviewed in the course of this review:

MNS/METSI/LMMB Organizational Review

Philip Chartier, Minister, METSI
Al Rivard, Associate Minister, METSI
Perry Chaboyer, CEO, METSI
Bonnie Start, Resource Officer, METSI
Dwayne Docken, Resource Officer, METSI
Kelly Pruden, Resource Officer, METSI
Murray Hamilton, Vice President, MNS
Allan Morin, Treasurer, MNS
Denis Hardy, Manager, Saskatoon LMMB
Bev Laliberte, Manager, Buffalo Narrows LMMB
Al Heise, HRDC
Karen Booth, HRDC
Janice Baron, HRDC
Tina Eberts, HRDC (by telephone)

Benchmarking

Manitoba:

Rick Magus, Manager, HRDC Manitoba
Cheryl Dumont, Program Director, Manitoba Metis Federation

Alberta:

Collette Goslin, Partnership Secretariat, HRDC Alberta
Joanne Plamandon, Metis Nation of Alberta

Ottawa:

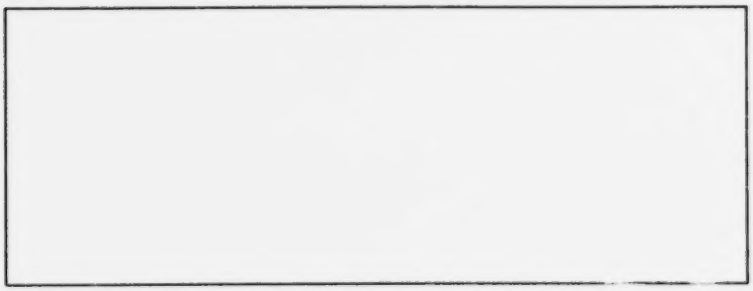
Bob Dewis, Senior Program Officer, Aboriginal Relations Office
Brian Pelletier, Senior Program Officer, Aboriginal Relations Office
Dave Hallmann, Director of Programs, Aboriginal Relations Office

British Columbia:

Johann Steinmann, Program Director, Metis Provincial Council
John Clarkson, HRDC British Columbia

Saskatchewan:

Randy Johns, Manager Keewatin Career Development Corp.
Joe Hindley, Manager, Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives



Metis Nation of Saskatchewan Regional Bilateral Agreement Review

Analysis of Internal Controls and Administrative Expenditures

For the 9 Months Ended December 31, 1997

Prepared for:

Human Resources Development Canada

July 1998

INTRODUCTION

Arthur Andersen & Co. ("Andersen") was retained by Human Resources Development Canada ("HRDC") to perform a special review concerning the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan ("MNS") Regional Bilateral Agreement on Labour Force Development ("RBA") and specifically, Metis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. ("METSI").

The objectives of our review included:

- reviewing the current financial position of METSI as it relates to potential overpayments with respect to administrative expenditures funded through HRDC for the period April 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997; and
- reviewing the current organizational structure, reporting relationships, internal control structure, current operating procedures and controls in place to provide financial accountability by METSI in relation to the RBA; and
- to provide recommendations for improvements and an implementation plan to the current management control and organizational structure in order to assist in the provision of future financial accountability and enhance communication, reporting and operating relationships.

In connection with our review of METSI and pursuant to the terms of reference dated February 25, 1998, we have, at HRDC's request, obtained certain financial and accounting data related to METSI. Except as indicated, we did not test or otherwise verify any of the data. The scope of our work did not include procedures considered necessary under generally accepted auditing standards for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the accompanying financial and accounting data of METSI taken as a whole or on the individual amounts presented therein.

Accordingly, we do not express any such opinion. Had we performed such additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that may have been reported to you.

We make no representation regarding the sufficiency, for HRDC's purposes, of the procedures described below or the financial and accounting data relating to METSI. Furthermore, this report should not be taken to supplant the additional inquiries and procedures that should be undertaken in HRDC's consideration of the review of METSI.

This report is furnished solely for HRDC's use in connection with our review of METSI. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

PROCEDURES AND FINDINGS

The procedures performed during our engagement are as outlined in the terms of reference. These procedures and the related findings are as detailed below:

1. *Review documentation and other relevant information necessary to gain an understanding of the propriety of the expenditures claimed under the terms of the agreements.*

   1.1. Procedures Performed

   Andersen reviewed the RBA and in accordance with paragraph 3.0 of the RBA, the agreement considers eligible costs for labour market activities to be those:

   (a) incurred by METSI in the implementation and administration of labour market activities within the mandate of HRDC; or
   (b) invoiced to METSI under a contract under the RBA; and
   (c) considered eligible as established in the METSI Policy and Procedure Manual.

   but shall not include:

   (a) construction of a building or the purchase of land or buildings;
   (b) the purchase of equipment unless it is more cost effective to purchase than to lease; and
   (c) cost overruns or costs incurred after March 31, 1999;
   (d) travel rates in excess of Treasury Board Guidelines.

   Also, in accordance with paragraph 3.1, eligible costs incurred through administrative overheads arising from the delivery of programs and services will not exceed 25% of total eligible costs. An agreement concerning full definitions of costs constituting administrative overheads will be reached between HRDC and METSI within 90 days of signing of the RBA and such definitions included within the RBA.

   Andersen obtained and reviewed the HRDC National Guide to Agreement Monitoring, Treasury Board Guidelines for Travel Expenses, Results Measurement and Reporting for RBA's, HRDC's RBA Aboriginal Flexible Funding Arrangements Handbook. Andersen discussed the expenditure policies with both HRDC and METSI staff. The aforementioned documents and discussions were used as a basis to determine the criteria for allowable expenditures in consideration of potential overpayments of administrative expenditures.

   1.2. Results of Procedures

   As of the date of our procedures, METSI was in the process of completing their Policy and Procedure Manual. However, we were unable to obtain a draft of the policies regarding the accounting and reporting of expenditures allowed under the RBA. These policies and procedures were also not in place during the period of our review from July 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997.

   Through review of the HRDC documentation provided and discussions with HRDC and METSI personnel, there were no formal written policies regarding the propriety of the majority of the

expense classifications allowed with the exception of travel expenses. HRDC personnel have advised Andersen that in the past, HRDC personnel have used their own experience and professional judgement in determining the propriety of claims for administrative expenses, but those guidelines used have never been formalized or documented for use by HRDC, METSI or other third parties.

Andersen also noted, that in accordance with paragraph 3.1 of the RBA, an agreement concerning full definitions of costs constituting administrative overhead was never consummated. This was confirmed through discussion with HRDC and METSI personnel.

1.3. Recommendations

METSI should continue its efforts to complete their Policy and Procedure Manual. The guidelines developed in this manual should be discussed with and reviewed by HRDC personnel in order to determine if the proposed policies and procedures are in agreement with HRDC's guidelines for costs associated with the RBA.

HRDC should document its guidelines for the propriety of expenses allowed under the agreement. This will provide METSI with a clear understanding of allowable expenditures and the supporting documentation required under the RBA and will facilitate in the finalization of their own Policy and Procedure Manual.

HRDC should also, in conjunction with the RBA, finalize the agreement concerning the full definition of costs constituting administrative overheads as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the RBA.

2. *Work in conjunction with HRDC and METSI representatives in reviewing administrative expenditures for the period April 1, 1997 to June 30, 1997 prepared by HRDC and preparing the period of July 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997 through the provision of a source and use of funds statement.*

2.1. Procedures Performed

Andersen obtained the results of the monitoring of administrative expenditures performed by HRDC for the period April 1, 1997 to June 30, 1997 and discussed the results with both HRDC and METSI personnel. This was performed to gain an understanding of the monitoring process, results of the monitoring and the propriety of expenditures resulting in either potential overpayments or unsupported expenditures.

From this review, Andersen developed a workplan for compiling a source and use of funds statement for the period July 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997 ("the review period") as follows:

2.1.1. Based on the general ledger provided by Stewart and Associates for the period under review, compile a source and use of funds statement based on receipts, expenditures and changes in asset and liability accounts to reconcile the changes in cash balances during the period.

2.1.2. Inquire as to the nature of the changes in the asset and liability accounts. Identify any unusual transactions or changes in account balances and discuss the nature of these items with Stewart and Associates to gain an understanding of the actual transaction and their proper accounting treatment.

2.1.3. Agree all funding received to deposit slips and remittance advices, and/or confirm with HRDC. This includes agreeing revenues recorded in the general ledger to cash deposits recorded on bank statements and confirmation of amounts funded by HRDC.

2.1.4. Agree all cash balances at the beginning and end of each period to bank reconciliations prepared and to bank statements. Examine reconciliations for large or unusual items and items that did not clear the bank within a reasonable period of time.

2.1.5. Agree all payroll amounts to payroll book. Agree cancelled payroll cheques to amounts recorded in the general ledger and to the employee payroll register.

2.1.6. Agree all payments made for RBA administration, Strategic Initiatives (SI) and Regional Offices to supporting documentation. These payments include amounts paid to the LMMB's for their administrative expenses. Since support for these claims was returned to the LMMB's, compare the amounts recorded in the general ledger to the actual amounts paid according to the bank statement and to the cancelled cheques to ensure the cheques have been properly endorsed.

2.1.7. Based on a sample of cheques greater than $500 for all other expenditures, agree cheque amount to the general ledger, to supporting invoice or documentation that provides evidence as to the type and amount of the expenditure, and review the support for proper authorization by METSI management. Compare the expenditures to HRDC guidelines developed through documentation and discussion, and identify potential overpayments and unsupported expenditures.

Andersen's workplan was reviewed with HRDC personnel who agreed on both its scope and depth of its procedures.

METSI's accounting during the period under review was performed by Stewart and Associates ("Stewart"). They were hired by METSI to perform the accounting functions for the organization after the internal accountant left the organization. Andersen met with HRDC personnel and a Stewart representative, representing METSI's accounting function, prior to performing the financial review for the review period. HRDC personnel provided insight into the type of expenditures that may require more detailed scrutiny with respect to qualifying expenditures and provided their experiences from past periods that were monitored.

2.2. Results of Procedures

Andersen compiled the statement of source and use of funds (the "statement") shown in the Attachment. The workplan procedures noted above were performed by Andersen. Andersen reviewed the general ledger accounts for certain assets and liabilities. Andersen noted that adjusting journal entries have been posted during the review period. These adjustments affected certain expenditures,

asset and/or liability accounts. Andersen discussed these adjustments with Stewart. There was no reasonable explanation as to the nature of the adjustments, the journal entries were reversed for the purposes of compiling the statement These reversals are noted below and are reflected in the statement prepared by Andersen.

The results of the workplan procedures were as follows:

2.2.1. Source and use of funds statement was compiled with the net change in cash reconciled to the opening and ending balances of the cash accounts (see Attachment).

2.2.2. Andersen noted the changes in the accounts receivable, accounts payable and unearned revenue accounts during the period. They are as follows:

Account	Preliminary Change	Adjustments	Adjusted Change
Accounts receivable	$ 6,300 increase	$ (3,073)	$ 3,227 increase
Accounts payable	$ 50,819 decrease	$ 74,014	$ 23,195 increase
Unearned revenue	$ 210,529 decrease	$ (210,529)	No change

The unearned revenue account should reflect any funds received that have not been recognized as revenue for accounting purposes since they have not been earned yet. Since there was no unearned revenue at any point during the period, the balance in this account was adjusted to reflect no change in the account. The net change in the above accounts, and as shown on the statement are due to the following:

- Accounts receivable, increase of $3,227 due to an increase in the GST receivable.
- Accounts payable, increase of $23,195 due to METSI taking custody of the Prince Albert LMMB's trust account.
- Unearned revenue did not change after the adjustments were reversed.

2.2.3. Agreed all funding received to deposit slips and remittance advices, and by confirmation with HRDC. Any discrepancies noted were due to the timing of HRDC funding from June which were deposited by METSI in July.

2.2.4. Agreed all cash balances at beginning and end of the period to bank reconciliations and bank statements. No unusual or large reconciling items were noted, and all reconciling items cleared the bank within the subsequent month.

2.2.5. Agreed all payroll amounts to the payroll book. The cancelled cheques for all payroll amounts paid during the period were agreed to the payroll book and to the amounts recorded in the general ledger.

2.2.6. Agreed all payments made for RBA administration costs, Strategic Initiatives (SI) and Regional Offices (RO) to supporting documentation. These expenditures were agreed to the cheque requisition and support for the expenditure such as an invoice or contract. For payments to the LMMB's, the support for the payments was not available and therefore

Andersen agreed the amounts to the cancelled cheques and bank statements reflecting the actual amount paid. Andersen also reviewed the cancelled cheques to ensure the amounts were properly endorsed.

2.2.7. Agreed expenditures greater than $500 for all other expense captions to the general ledger, to supporting invoice or documentation providing evidence of the type and amount of expenditure, reviewed for proper authorization, and propriety per HRDC guidelines.

The total of expenditures agreed to documented support amounted to approximately $196,000, or 75% of total reviewed expenditures not related to the payments made to LMMB's and identified as SI or RO payments in the general ledger.

For payments to LMMB's, Andersen agreed the amount paid to the cancelled cheque and bank statement noting the cheque was correctly recorded and endorsed by the appropriate LMMB and that the cheque cleared the bank within a reasonable time frame.

During the review of the expenditures, Andersen identified the following potential overpayments and unsupported expenditures. These expenditures are included in the source and use of funds statement attached.

Date	Cheque #	Caption	Amount	Nature of Overpayment
31-Jul	1226	Telephone	$ 944.98	Reclassified PA expense to PA operations funding expense
24-Aug	1333	Travel - Board	325.96	Appears invoice paid twice, and expense amount does not break out the GST component
29-Dec	1588	Travel - Board	200.52	Need detail and support for $200.52 of cell phone charges included in expense claim
29-Dec	163	Consulting Fees	4,000.00	Need support for additional $4,000 payment, since contract only specified $12,000
12-Dec	1579	RBA - Project Coordinator Wages	16,500.00	No support for "contract" amount
Various	Various	RBA - Project Coordinator Wages	22,670.00	Honorariums paid to board members not allowed by HRDC, according to HRDC personnel with whom we spoke
31-Jul	1234	SI - Travel - Staff	506.30	Advance for travel claim - no support or reconciliation to actual claim that was paid
12-Aug	1298	SI - Travel - Staff	761.88	No support for this amount
23-Aug	1335	Misc.	530.00	Insufficient support for this amount
		Total Potential Overpayments:	$ 46,439.64	

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These potential overpayments and unsupported expenditures represent approximately 3% of the total expenditures during the period under review.

It was noted that the current METSI administration was not in place at the time of these expenditures. Since the change in administration, policies and procedures may have been put in place that may have prevented these potential overpayments from occurring.

2.3. Recommendations

METSI administration should review the potential overpayments with HRDC to develop a plan for providing the appropriate support where required, and ensuring METSI has in place procedures for preventing similar overpayments in the future. This plan should be prepared in conjunction with and in coordination with the METSI Policy and Procedure Manual being developed.

Cash advances for travel claims should be reconciled to actual claims paid.

3. *Review the current internal control structure, current operating procedures and controls in place to provide financial accountability by METSI in relation to the RBA.*

3.1. Procedures Performed

Andersen discussed with METSI personnel, the control structure in place and current operating procedures and controls in place to provide financial accountability in relation to the RBA. Andersen observed these procedures taking place and reviewed documents showing evidence of control procedures in place.

3.2. Results of Procedures

Based on discussion with METSI personnel, the current operating procedures have been developed over the past six months by the new administration. The procedures in place during the review period were developed by the prior administration and we were unable to determine the extent of controls in place during the period under review.

Based on our understanding of HRDC's guidelines, the current controls in place provide adequate accountability by METSI in relation to the RBA. However, the criteria for measuring these procedures and accountability functions must be agreed on by HRDC and METSI. Andersen observed the following controls in place during our review:

- segregation of duties between the approval and recording of expenditures
- authorization required from both management and the Board for all expenditures

METSI is in the process of developing a written policy and procedure manual. The manual has not yet been completed and therefore we cannot comment on the extent or sufficiency of its implementation, or the strength of its controls.

Although certain internal controls are evident, Andersen did not test their effectiveness, nor were we able to conclude on the impact these controls have on the propriety of current expenditures. Although METSI is working to improve the overall management control environment, there remains room for improvement which should occur as the Policy and Procedure Manual is completed and implemented.

METSI has not been able to receive timely financial information due to the reliance on the external accountant. Any improvement in controls must be aided by the provision of timely and reliable financial information.

3.3. Recommendations

Consideration should be given to performing the accounting function internally. This would provide more timely and useful financial information which is key for strong financial management. The person(s) hired for this function should be well trained in the preparation of financial statements and to help in supporting the accounting functions at each of the LMMB's to provide consistent reporting to METSI.

See additional recommendations in section 1.3.

4. *Conduct a broad review of two Local Metis Management Boards ("LMMB's") financial records, reporting packages, and financial systems of internal controls in order to provide a sample, which may or may not be representative of the current financial records and organizational structures in place at the twelve LMMB's in Saskatchewan. The LMMB's are to be selected in collaboration with HRDC and METSI.*

4.1. Procedures Performed

Based on discussions with METSI and HRDC personnel, the LMMB's chosen for review were Saskatoon and Buffalo Narrows. Andersen attended at the offices of these two LMMB's and met with the Executive Directors. Discussions took place to gain an understanding of the overall operations of the LMMB's, and the financial systems in place that are used to produce the financial records and reporting packages submitted to METSI and HRDC.

4.2. Results of Procedures

Andersen discussed the controls in place to ensure financial records reflect transactions that are authorized, properly recorded and supported by the required documentation. The LMMB personnel believe that these controls are in place and effective.

4.3. Recommendations

As a result of discussions with the two LMMB's Executive Directors, Andersen identified several areas that METSI could focus on to support the LMMB's efforts:

(a) Improved communication – the LMMB's would prefer more detailed communication about METSI's expectations and a guide to performing projects. They would also appreciate more updates about any developments at METSI.
(b) Help to find resources for administrative requirements – the LMMB's would appreciate any assistance to provide additional funding for administrative support through grants or programs that METSI is aware of. METSI could also facilitate the sharing of ideas that an individual LMMB generates to help the other LMMB's with similar needs.
(c) Training on AccPac – both of the LMMB's surveyed use the AccPac software to a limited extent either because of complexity for the accounting function performed, or a lack of ongoing training and support for personnel who need to use it.
(d) Support for computer services – the LMMB's make limited or no use of the TAS system implemented at each of the LMMB's. They require a support resource to help them implement the system into their day-to-day operations.

5. *Provide recommendations to enhance the procedures in preparation of the source and use of funds regarding HRDC's monitoring process.*

5.1. Recommendations

The source and use of funds statements should be prepared based on the transactions recorded in the general ledger. Assuming monthly bank reconciliations continue to be prepared as they are now, it is possible to ensure that cash transactions are recorded in the accounts. Using transactions as recorded in the bank statements will only provide transactions that have cleared the bank, while this does not provide a reasonable basis for supporting the amounts claimed.

Financial statements should be prepared on a monthly basis within a reasonable period of time (i.e. 1 to 2 months) considering that transactions are recorded on a cash basis. The use of an internal accountant can facilitate the expediting of this procedure.

Criteria for determining the propriety of expenditures should be established together by METSI and HRDC and implemented into METSI's policy and procedure manual. The controls established by these policies and procedures should be tested periodically to ensure they are in place and working effectively.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations can be summarized into the following points:

A It is important for HRDC to document the guidelines that will establish the propriety of administrative expenses to be reimbursed under the RBA.

B METSI must continue its efforts to complete the Policy and Procedure Manual. This should be done in conjunction with HRDC's efforts to document the expense guidelines to ensure that METSI's manual satisfies HRDC's requirements.

C METSI should ensure that the policies and procedures in the manual are implemented properly. In addition, the manual should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is still relevant and useful to the organization.

D Working together, HRDC and METSI should develop a workplan for resolving the unsupported expenditures that occurred throughout the period from April 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997. Resolving this issue on a timely basis will allow both organizations to address their current challenges more effectively and help distance any incidents from the past.

E METSI should continue its efforts to restore an internal accounting function. Any improvements that are made to the control environment must be accompanied by the production of timely and accurate financial information. This will also aid management in their decision making abilities and free up additional management time.

F Once METSI has re-established its own accounting function, this individual can serve as a support for the LMMB's in performing their own administrative functions through technical and software support. This will allow LMMB personnel to focus more on their program objectives.

ATTACHMENT

METIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.

STATEMENT OF SOURCE AND USE OF FUNDS

JULY 1, 1997 TO DECEMBER 31, 1997

TOGETHER WITH NOTICE TO READER

ATTACHMENT

NOTICE TO READER

We have compiled the statement of source and use of funds of **METIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.** for the six month period ended December 31, 1997 from information provided by management. We have not audited, reviewed or otherwise attempted to verify the accuracy or completeness of such information. Readers are cautioned that this statement may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Winnipeg, Manitoba
June, 24 1998

ATTACHMENT

METIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.
STATEMENT OF SOURCE AND USE OF FUNDS
FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997
(Not Audited or Reviewed – See Notice to Reader)

CHANGE IN OPERATING ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Accounts receivable	20(1)(b)	$ ()
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities		
SOURCES OF FUNDS		
Saskatoon operations funding		268,035
LMMB operations funding		992,805
Other revenue		
Rent income		
Strategic initiatives funding		16,875
USE OF FUNDS		
Wages and benefits		
Manager	20(1)(b)	
Resource Officer		
Minister		
Support staff		
Secretary/Receptionist		
Employer's share of CPP		
Employer's share of EI		
Advertising		(8,746)
Audit and legal fees		(17,541)
Bank charges		(716)
Equipment purchase and lease		(214)
Insurance		(544)
Office maintenance		(838)
Annual meetings		(2,890)
Miscellaneous		(1,050)
Penalties and late charges		(748)
Office supplies		(1,080)
Postage		(259)
Rent		(16,000)
Equipment repair and maintenance		(108)
Subscriptions		(315)
Telephone		(9,561)
Travel – Board and staff		(32,333)
Consulting		(16,000)
Regional offices		(1,472,041)
RBA administration		(35,896)
Strategic Initiatives		(26,413)
NET USE OF FUNDS	20(1)(b)	
CASH BALANCE AT JULY 1, 1997		
CASH BALANCE AT DECEMBER 31, 1997		$